LOCAL NEWS

The Daily Colonist.

(ESTABLISHED 1858)

CLASSIFIED

No. 44—101st YEAR | VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1959 | SECOND NEWS SECTION

Around the Island

Family Flees Fire, Loses Everything

ALBERNI—A plywood plant worker, his wife and two small daughters barely escaped with their lives when their rural home burned to the ground early yesterday. Nothing was saved from the three-room Beaver Creek district home.

Mr. and Mrs. George Salisbury were awakened by smoke at 3.30 a.m. After throwing the two children, Hilda, 3½, and Helen, 10 months, from a bedroom window, they escaped themselves. Mrs. Salisbury ran to the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. Horst next door to give the alarm.

The fire caused a power blackout in the area and electric pumps of neighboring homes were rendered useless in an attempt to extinguish the blaze. There is no fire department in the rural district of Beaver Creek.

The Salisbury home was more than five miles north of Alberni.

Members of the family were given shelter with neighbors and the Salvation Army has issued an appeal for clothing and household goods.

Cause of the fire may have been an overheated kitchen stove.

★ ★ ★

NANAIMO—Vancouver Island Zoological Society is awaiting the decision of the B.C. game department's zoo committee following a 90-minute inspection of the Wellington zoo yesterday.

A three-man inspection team—game inspector Robert Sinclair, game warden Frank Greenfield, and game biologist Donald Robinson—inspected the zoo and will submit their report to the zoo committee.

The society expects to hear whether or not the zoo may remain open within the next two or three weeks. If it may remain open, preparations will be made immediately for the 1959 tourist season.

★ ★ ★

NANAIMO — Among appeals to a court of revision against increased land and property assessments yesterday was that of an old-age pensioner.

The pensioner, David Ross, of Townsite Road, said his assessment had risen five times ince 1951. He was appealing the latest $700 increase in assessment.

Mr. Ross told the court of revision that pensioners living in rented premises were "better off."

★ ★ ★

PARKSVILLE — Something new for Parksville is a skin-diving club which was recently formed bv a group of diving enthusiasts of the district.

Eddie Wheeler was elected president of the club, Terry Thompson, vice-president, and William Hawkes, secretary-treasurer.

There are already eight members completely equipped with skin-diving gear and 15 potential members attended the inaugural meeting.

Diving is done Sunday afternoons.

★ ★ ★

DUNCAN—There was a 100 per cent turnout oi boys and their fathers for a father and son banquet held by the 1st Quamichan Scout Troop here.

The gathering was held in St. Peter's Quamichan hall, with Scout Master Norm Howarth in charge of the affair.

NANAIMO (CP)—Mr. Justice A. D. MacFarlane will preside over Spring Assizes when they open here today, Crown prosecutor Harold Hine said Monday. Two cases will be heard, one a criminal negligence charge against Liak Singh and the other a charge of possession of an offensive weapon against Peter Szoke.

★ ★ ★

B.C.'s three-man Royal Commission on Education will hold further hearings on Vancouver Island and in Powell River from March 16 to 20, Dean S. N. F. Chant, commission chairman, announced yesterday.

Dates and locations of hearings are as follows: March 16, Duncan; March 17, Nanaimo; March 18, Qualicum; March 19, Courtenay; March 20, Powell River.

The Vancouver Island and Powell River hearings will be the 12th group conducted by the commission since it was established in January, 1958, to investigate all educational matters up to the university level with the exception of finances.

Organizations who wish to submit briefs to the commission should forward five copies to Dean Chant at least two weeks before the hearings.

Topics to be discussed include the basic aims of the B.C. educational system, curriculum and courses of study, textbooks, reports, school discipline and utilization of facilities.

Members of the commission are: Dean Chant chairman; John Liersch, vice-president of the Powell River Company, and R. P. Walrod, manager of B.C. Tree Fruits Ltd., Kelowna.

★ ★ ★

DUNCAN—King's Daughter's Hospital, Duncan, will have an operating surplus of "a few thousand dollars," for 1958, said Mr. Ken Noton, administrator, at a meeting of the hospital board, and "a fair surplus" from non-operating revenue.

Patient days for 1958 totalled 31,974, a drop of 3,093 from the 1957 total of 34,057, while at the same time the number of patients entering the hospital increased from 3,925 in 1957 to 3,956 in 1958.

★ ★ ★

PORT ALBERNI — Alberni District Amateur Radio Club, inactive since the fall of 1952, has been reorganized.

Elected president was Russ Upsdell, while other officers are Stan Brand, vice-president; and Dirk Vanigen, secretary-treasurer. Appointments will be made later to form a complete executive.

★ ★ ★

PARKSVILLE — Bill Barfoot has ben elected president of a teen-age square dance club recently formed in Parksville. Caller for the club is Douglas George of Port Alberni and there are about 50 members. Dances are held Friday evenings at the Legion hall from 8 to 10.30 p.m.

★ ★ ★

PORT ALBERNI—A mothers' march Saturday resulted in collection of more than $3,600 for the Kinsmen's project of polio rehabilitaion and child care. Gordon Jenks, treasurer of the local campaign, said that the committee is optimistic about reaching the $6,000 objective set for the district.

NANAIMO (CP) — Two juveniles who escaped from Brannan Lake Friday were returned Sunday after a 30-hour spree of theft, sleeping in a barn and a dunking in ice-cold water.

The two, aged 16 and 17, were picked up Sunday while sleeping in a Cedar farmer's hayloft.

Police said that after their escape Friday, they broke into an East Wellington house and stole clothes, oranges and a bottle of sherry. Then they missed their footing in the darkness and fell in to a creek. They broke into another house for a quick change of clothing and a bicycle. A second bike was stolen from another home.

From a trailer, they took a .22-cabre rifle without ammunition, food and 42 cents in pennies. After stealing six packages of cookies from the A and B Store in Cedar, they rode to the hayloft.

The farmer spotted the bicycles and reported to police.

★ ★ ★

NANAIMO—A spark from an electric drill was blamed for an explosion in a gill-netter being repaired by Nanaimo fisherman William Peterson. The spark ignited gas fumes.

Peterson suffered burns to his hands and face and was taken to Nanaimo General Hospital for treatment Sunday morning. The boat was only slightly damaged.

★ ★ ★

PARKSVILLE—A total of $1,002 was collected by marching mothers in the Parksville-Qualicum areas during the one-hour door-to-door canvass for the Kinsmen polio fund.

PTA members from both villages assisted the Kinsmen and Kinettes and Qualicum Beach Rotary Club provided some cars and drivers.

Committee chairman Ted Pitt is confident that the quota of $1,800 will be reached.

★ ★ ★

CAMPBELL RIVER—James Moore was elected president at a recent meeting of the local Welfare Council.

Other officers elected include Mrs. H. C. Reilly, vice-president; Mrs. G. Baldwin, secretary; and Rev. E. S. Fleming, treasurer.

Executive members are: James Smith, Mrs. J. Barton, Mrs. A. Grant, and Canon T. D. Proctor.

★ ★ ★

CAMPBELL RIVER—More than 25 old-age pensioners recently held their first meeting in two years to elect a new slate of officers.

James Cummings was elected president; George Parsons, vice-president; Mrs. John Saville, secretary; and Ernest Masters, treasurer.

The meeting decided to resume meetings, to be held on the fourth Friday of each month in St. Peter's Anglican Hall.

★ ★ ★

NANAIMO—The "Mothers' March" on polio and child rehabilitation realized $3,500 during a one-hour blitz campaign Saturday night.

★ ★ ★

TOFINO—The Tofino Centennial Committee held its last meeting in Tofino Village Hall at 8 p.m. with the chairman of the village commissioners, William Sharp, and members of the Centennial Committee present.

Axe in hand, fireman Eric Simmons stands in the charred ruins of a third-floor apartment at 2550 Vancouver yesterday. A dozen adults and children escaped the burning building early in the morning. Firemen and police helped carry children out and the fast-working firefighters succeeded in confining the blaze to the third floor.—(Colonist photo.)

Forlorn symbol of a burned-out family is this high chair, in the ruins of a kitchen at 422 Parry. Mr. and Mrs. Donald McQueen lost all their possessions in blaze, and their children Donnie, 2, and Kim, 3, were confined to St. Joseph's Hospital suffering from burns sustained in the Sunday morning blaze.—(Colonist photo.)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Only Luck Prevented Loss of Life

Victorians Cheat Death in Two Fires

Two Tots, Mother Burned, Family Left Destitute

Clouds of Acrid Smoke Hamper Rescue Escape

Only great good fortune prevented possible loss of life in a fire which swept through an apartment building at 2550 Vancouver early yesterday.

A Victoria family yesterday was still struggling to realize the full cost of a fire which Sunday morning left three of its members suffering from burns—two still in hospital—and all of them without belongings.

Everything they owned was destroyed or damaged by the blaze which broke out in their rented home, 422 Parry, about 9 a.m. Sunday.

Two-year-old Donald McQueen is in "fairly good" condition at St. Joseph's Hospital, with second-degree burns to the back, chest, arms and face.

In the same hospital his sister Kim, 3, is in "fair" condition with first and second-degree burns to arms and knees.

ARM BURNS, SHOCK

Their mother, Mrs. Doreen McQueen, 28, was treated for a slight arm burn and shock, and discharged.

Youngest McQueen child, 15-month-old Bambi, was rescued unhurt from the house, while five-year-old Heather was spending the night with her grandmother.

The father, Donald McQueen, had left home for his first day's work since before Christmas, about an hour before the fire broke out. He has only worked three days in three months, his family said yesterday.

NEIGHBOR CREDITED

Mrs. McQueen and a neighbor, Leon Notte, 28, of 416 Parry, are credited with saving the children's lives.

The three youngsters were asleep in the ground-floor front bedroom of the house, which had a single-unit heater while a double-heater served the living room behind.

Fire Chief James Bayliss yesterday blamed the fire on faulty installation of the gas heaters, which were too close to the woodwork.

Apparently woodwork and wallpaper caught fire, and when Mrs. McQueen first noticed it, the bedroom was circled with flame. She grabbed Kim and Bambi and took them outdoors, and as she tried to go back for Donnie her screams drew the attention of Mr. Notte.

HURRIED TO HELP

He hurried over to help.

"I could hear the little boy crying," he said, "so I smashed the front windows to get him. He was on the floor behind the bed, and I had to pull it away.

"I managed to get him over to the window. He was pretty badly burned. I just got a blister on my hand and a red forehead.'

City police and another neighbor, William Daly, of 433 Parry, took the injured to hospital.

GRANDMOTHER'S HOME

Little Bambi, meanwhile, was taken to the home of her grandmother, Mrs. Mabel McDermott, farther along the block at 402 Parry. There she and Heather were being cared for yesterday by Mrs. McQueen's sister, Mrs. W. H. Jones, who had arrived in Victoria from Calgary only Saturday night to visit her mother, also under doctor's care.

Ground floor of the Parry Street house was burned out, and smoke damage was heavy on the upper floor.

★ ★ ★

LEON NOTTE
. . . heard crying

★ ★ ★

As it was, almost a dozen adults and children escaped or were helped to safety in their night clothes.

Alarm was turned in at 4.12 a.m., and within minutes a ladder truck and four pumpers were on the scene. About 2,000 feet of hose were laid out to fight the blaze.

TOP-FLOOR SUITES

Flames broke out, from a cause not yet determined, in one of the top-floor suites of the old block, which runs between Vancouver and Fifth north of Bay.

The fact that most of the fire was contained on the top floor made possible escape of the occupants. City firemen and police helped carry children, wrapped in blankets, from the burning structure to the homes of neighbors who sheltered the burned-out families for the rest of thte night.

As it was, escapes and rescues had to be effected through billowing clouds of thick, acrid smoke. All apartments in the building were damaged either by flames or smoke or water.

FOUR CHILDREN

Among those helped to safety were a Mrs. Hunt and her four small children; T. S. Medler, building owner; Mr. and Mrs. West from Suite 5, and Jack Laverne Heath.

More fortunate was the family of Keith Starling.

Mr. Starling, who with his family occupied a top-floor apartment, was called to work night-shift Sunday for a city taxi firm. Because his wife is expecting her third child, he drove her and the other two children to the home of his brother, L. J. Starling, 864 Colville, to spend the night.

If this had not been the case, the family might well have been trapped by the flames.

Today they, and other occupants of the building, are looking for new homes.

Sunday, Mrs. Starling put out a wash including many of her children's clothing, and yesterday her sister-in-law was able to recover these from the line where they still hung.

Fire Chief James Bayliss said yesterday the building itself was insured, but he did not know about the contents. Cause of the fire is still under investigation, he said.

Cash, Food Needed By Family

Donations of cash and food, clothing and furniture for the McQueen family, whose belongings were lost in a fire Sunday, will be handled by the James Bay Community Club.

Harold Ketchell, club president, said his group was starting the fund with its own $50 donation.

Donations may be sent or taken to the Ketchell home at 224 Dallas, EV 2-2333.

Blood Donor Clinic Slated This Week

Blood donor clinic will be held at Red Cross House 1046 Fort Street, today and Wednesday. Hours are from 1.30 to 4.30 p.m. and from 7 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.

The clinic will move to Royal Roads Thursday.

Let Pupils See Queen In Arena

Suggestion that the Memorial Arena be used to allow a maximum number of school children and elderly people to see the Queen during Her Majesty's visit this summer was sent to city council yesterday by Frank Mulliner, arena commission chairman.

Mr. Mulliner suggested the arena could seat about 8,000 children, "up to grade 5 or 6," as well as some elderly people who would be unable to stand for a long time in the streets.

$20 Will Buy Food for a Balanced Diet for a Month

Colonist reporter Ted Shackleford has been assigned to live on $55 for a month to discover how senior citizens on old-age assistance payments live and what their problems are.

He will be available in The Daily Colonist office—EV 3-4111 — between 4 and 5 p.m. each day.

By TED SHACKLEFORD

A pensioner can buy sufficient food to provide a balanced diet over a month for less than $20 . . . and here's the proof.

Mrs. A. Helen Findlay, who lives in the Fairfield district, telephone EV 4-6278, is a pensioner who prepared a food list two years ago for the assistance of fellow pensioners.

It was published at the time by the Silver Threads Service, and the total was $19.94. Yesterday, with Mrs. Findlay's help I brought the prices up to date . . . and the new total is $19.18! Here it is:

Nine quarts of milk, $2.16; nine loaves of bread, $1.63; one-half pound of tea, 70 cents; one pound of coffee, 79 cents; two pounds of butter, $1.41; four-pound tin of jam, 69 cents; cereals, 42 cents; two pounds of sugar, 23 cents; 18 eggs, 75 cents; fruit and fruit juice, $2, 10 pounds of potatoes, 59 cents; vegetables, fresh or frozen, $2; staples (salt, pepper, flour and salt), $1.30; meat and fish, $5.50.

The $5.50 meat budget breaks down this way:

Two pounds of minced steak, 90 cents;, two waffle steaks, 44 cents; one pound of lean stewing beef, 65 cents; two lamb chops, 45 cents; two lean lamb chops (for hot pot), 45 cents; one pound of pork sausages, 49 cents; one pound of beef sausage, 39 cents; one-half pound of bacon, 37 cents; one tin of corned beef, 37 cents.

The budget for meat totals only $4.51, less than the $5.50 allowed for it, but the extra can be used to either buy more meat or fish or to cover price fluctuations throughout the list. Or it can simply be saved.

Most of the prices quoted are higher than can be found by shopping around.

Mrs. Findlay allows 34 meat meals from her budget—eight from the minced steak, two from the waffle steaks, four from the stewing beef, two from the lamb chops, two from the hot pot, four from the pork sausage, four from the beef sausage, four from the bacon and four from the corned beef.

"This can be followed rigidly or it can be used simply as a guide, and altered as a person wants to," Mrs. Findlay said yesterday.

"Before I get my cheque I make out a list of all the items I will want for the month, that can be kept without spoiling, and I buy them all together. The food which will not keep through the month I buy as I need it."

Sunday night I spoiled my record and accepted food—one and one-half slices of buttered toast. I was at a friend's home, watching television and I had a choice of sitting there eating or sitting there watching the others eat. I guess I'm a conformist deep down.

There seems a lot of misplaced sympathy over what I am eating and how I am living.

I don't want or need any sympathy or any help, myself—I can revert to steaks, chicken dinners and so on if I want to. It is the true pensioner who needs help—they can't stop.

Sunday morning I got up late and had two cups of tea and a bowl of puffed wheat for breakfast. I find the easiest way to deal with the puffed wheat is to put powdered milk in the bowl, pour boiling water over that and then drop the puffed wheat into it.

The wheat shrinks in the hot milk and I keep adding puffed wheat until the bowl is full. With sugar on top it is quite palatable.

Lunch was some of the brisket fried gently with potatoes and onions, plus some soup, and two more cups of tea.

Dinner was more soup with three slices of toast, two with margarine only and the third with both margarine and marmalade. Later in tthe evening, of course, I succumbed to the temptation of one and one-half slices of toast.

Yesterday I breakfasted on hot milk and unpuffed wheat, two slices of toast and two more cups of tea. For lunch I polished off the brisket, again fried with potatoes, soup and two cups of tea.

The last of the soup went for dinner, followed by two beef sausages, onions, potatoes and stewed celery, and two cups of tea.

I have spent a further 85 cents—a packet of cigaret papers (five cents), two beef sausages (15 cents), four strips of bacon (18 cents), a box of shredded wheat (22 cents), and six medium eggs (25 cents). My total expenditure to date is $31.69 and I have $19.31 left.

I have found, and no doubt many single pensioners have also found, that there seems a dearth of cheap, easy-to-prepare recipes for meals suitable for one person.

If readers know of any such recipes, bearing in mind that they must be able to be cooked on a hotplate, I'd like to know them. And I'll publish them if enough are sent in. No prizes, no rewards other than the reward of knowing the pensioners have been helped.